Claims

1. A method for sending electronic mail, including

separating at least one attachment from a text portion in an electronic mail message such that a link is created between said at least one attachment and said text portion;

delivering to a recipient said text portion separately from said at least one attachment; and

making said at least one attachment available from said text portion.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic mail message is composed by a first user at a sender device.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic message is delivered to a second user at a recipient device.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said separating further includes

caching said at least one attachment; and

creating said link within said text portion.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said caching occurs at a location relatively local to a first user when said caching is performed relatively local to a sender device.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said location includes any combination of: (1) a sender device, and (2) a sender gateway.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein said caching occurs at a location relatively local to said recipient.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said location includes any combination of: (1) a recipient device, and (2) a recipient gateway.

9. The method of claim 4, wherein said caching occurs at an Application Service Provider.

10. The method of claim 4, wherein a sender gateway and a recipient gateway are the same device.

11. The method of claim 4, wherein said link includes a hypertext link.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said delivering further includes

delivering said at least one attachment at a time other than when said text portion is delivered;

using a non-email transfer protocol to deliver said at least one attachment; and

selecting a preferred method for delivery.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said time is based on one or more considerations of: (1) communications network load, (2) cost for delivery, and (3) request by recipient to receive said at least one attachment.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said protocol includes File Transfer Protocol or Hypertext Transfer Protocol.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein said selecting further includes probing the receiving device to ascertain at least one preferred format, at least one caching location, or at least one transfer protocol for delivery of said at least one attachment and reformatting and transferring said at least one attachment using said at least one format, at least one caching location, or at least one transfer protocol responsive to said probing.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein said making further includes

publishing said at least one attachment at a location relatively local to a recipient device;

initiating a fetch for said at least one attachment;

fetching said at least one attachment;

presenting said at least one attachment to said recipient; and

scanning said electronic mail automatically on a regular basis for one of said links embedded in said electronic mail message and pre-fetching an associated attachment to be cached at a location relatively local to a recipient device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said publishing occurs at some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said initiating is directed at some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.

19. The method of claim 16, where in said at least one attachment is located at its cached location and transferred to said recipient device.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein said at least one attachment has been predownloaded to said recipient device.

21. The method of claim 16 wherein said scanning is performed by some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.

22. A apparatus for sending electronic mail, including

means for separating at least one attachment from a text portion in an electronic mail message such that a link is created between said at least one attachment and said text portion;

means for delivering to a recipient said text portion separately from said at least one attachment; and

means for making said at least one attachment available from said text portion.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said electronic mail message is composed by a first user at a sender device.

24. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said electronic message is delivered to a second user at a recipient device.

25. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said means for separating further includes

means for caching said at least one attachment; and

means for creating said link within said text portion.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said means for caching occurs at a location relatively local to a first user.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein said location includes any combination of: (1) a sender device, and (2) a sender gateway.

28. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said means for caching occurs at a location relatively local to said recipient.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein said location includes any combination of: (1) a recipient device, and (2) a recipient gateway.

30. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said means for caching occurs at an Application Service Provider.

31. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein a sender gateway and a recipient gateway are the same device.

32. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said link includes a hypertext link.

33. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said means for delivering further includes

means for delivering said at least one attachment at a time other than when said text portion is delivered;

means for using a non-email transfer protocol to deliver said at least one attachment; and

means for selecting a preferred method for delivery.

34. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said time is based on one or more considerations of: (1) communications network load, (2) cost for delivery, and (3) request by recipient to receive said at least one attachment.

35. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said protocol includes File Transfer Protocol or Hypertext Transfer Protocol.

36. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said means for selecting further includes means for probing the receiving device to ascertain at least one preferred format, at least one caching location, or at least one transfer protocol for delivery of said at least one attachment and means for reformatting and transferring said at least one attachment using said at least one format, at least one caching location, or at least one transfer protocol responsive to said means for probing

37. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said means for making further includes

means for publishing said at least one attachment at a location relatively local to a recipient device;

means for initiating a fetch for said at least one attachment;

means for fetching said at least one attachment;

means for presenting said at least one attachment to said recipient; and

means for scanning said electronic mail automatically on a regular basis for one of said links embedded in said electronic mail message and means for pre-fetching an associated attachment to be cached at a location relatively local to a recipient device.

38. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein said publishing occurs at some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.

39. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein said means for initiating is directed at some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.

40. The apparatus of claim 37, where in said at least one attachment is located at its cached location and transferred to said recipient device.

41. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein said at least one attachment has been predownloaded to said recipient device.

42. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein said means for scanning is performed by some combination of: (1) a sender gateway, (2) an application service provider, and (3) a recipient gateway.